

**Zambia's current population and migration patterns are shaped by past trajectories. Up until the 1980s, an urbanization process occurred, due to a vibrant mining industry. During the 1990s, the crash in copper prices and the shutting down of mines induced reverse migration flows from urban to rural areas. From the 2000s, the emergence of new drivers, combined with the existence of strong social networks inherited from the previous mining dynamics, has contributed to the diversification of Zambian migration patterns.**

### URBANIZATION AND RE-RURALIZATION: THE MINING SECTOR DRIVER

At the end of the 19th century, the colonists showed little interest in Northern Rhodesia, which was used mainly as a source of labour for gold mines in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. It was only after the discovery of Zambian copper deposits in 1928 that these international migration trends were reversed and reoriented towards internal migration. The activity generated by the mines led to two types of migration to the Copperbelt province: internal rural migration, mostly from the present Luapula and Northern Provinces, and migration from neighbouring countries, where the first mines had already been in operation for nearly 40 years, with the related abundant labour force.

Until Zambia's independence in 1964, the labour force in the mines comprised mostly men who would come alone to the Copperbelt from around the country, leaving their spouses and children behind. They would periodically return to visit their families. This was mainly because there were movement restrictions during the colonial period to minimize staff turnover. The trend toward urban settlement grew after 1964 with the end of restrictions on family reunification, thus contributing to the emergence of a category of urban workers in growing mining towns such as Ndola and Kitwe. Hence, fifteen years after independence, Zambia was one of the most urbanized countries in SSA; thus, at least 40% of Zambians were living in urban area, compared with the average of 22% in SSA in 1980. However, the links with rural villages remained, and many miners resettled in their villages after retirement.

The falling international copper prices from 1973 onwards marked the beginning of a sharp slowdown in mining activity, which impacted on urban growth for thirty years. Decreasing incomes and the deterioration of public services related to structural adjustment policies made city life more difficult. From the 1980s to the end of the 1990s, there was a "re-ruralization" due the reversed. This was despite continued migration to the capital city – Lusaka – especially from the Eastern, Southern and Northern Provinces. Between 1990 and 2000, census data show net migration rates in favour

of rural areas (+28 per thousand in-migration for rural versus – 47 per thousand out-migration of urban areas). This process was supported by the Zambian government, which was aware of growing discontent, and it promoted a "back to land" movement, facilitated by the country's large land availability. This quite singular re-ruralization process explains the high rates of rural households with urban origins in the provinces near mining areas and cities (more than 40% in the Copperbelt, Lusaka, Northern and North-Western Provinces).

### NEW DRIVERS AND NEW PATTERNS

Despite the new mining boom of the mid-2000s, urban-to-rural migration has continued, supported by the strong development of the medium-scale farming sector. Nevertheless, the improving economic environment in Zambia has seen the urban-rural migration slowing down, while the rural-to-urban flow has resumed, resulting again in urban growth. The yearly urban growth rate was 4.2% between 2000 and 2010, compared with 1.5% for the period 1990–2000. During the same period, urban growth in the North-Western Province reached 8.3% per year, mainly due to the attractiveness of new mining activities in the Province.

During the same period, migration dynamics had been diversifying. The 2010 national census highlighted a new major migration trend from urban to urban areas (39% of all internal lifetime migrants), especially between Lusaka, Central and Copperbelt Provinces. These are the most urbanized areas in the country and are along the main railway line. Rural-urban migration (30% of all lifetime migrants) are becoming more complex due to the blurring rural-urban divide resulting from better infrastructure and communication networks, and therefore improved mobility. Based on the 2010 census, most of the rural-urban flows are for non-economic reasons; for example joining family members, getting married, attending higher education, and obtaining medical care. This is certainly facilitated by the strong rural-urban social networks woven during the urbanization/re-ruralization movement. Nowadays, schooling implies migration: for young rural dwellers, starting school at the village and continuing at board-

ing schools in cities is a common feature when parents can afford it. It is possibly a first step in a migratory process, which can then be consolidated by a first job in intermediate provincial towns, before a longer-term migration to the capital or other major cities.

In addition to the previous patterns, rural-rural migration also appeared in the 1990s, especially from the Western and Southern provinces to the Central and North-Western provinces. Successive droughts and animal diseases that decimated cattle were a major push factor, particularly in the Southern province between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s. Looking like providing a pioneer front dynamic, the high land availability and good rains in the northern regions offered a strong incentive for many families from the Southern Province to resettle there, while keeping strong links with their relatives who remained behind. Based on the 2010 census, rural-rural flows represented 17% of national migration.

### CIRCULAR MIGRATION SUPPORTED BY SOCIAL NETWORKS

The higher mobility of people explains a rising renewed pattern: circular migration. This type of temporary migration, sometimes limited to a few months, is characterized by a return to the home place. It does not imply long distance movements as in most cases it remains intra-provincial.

This growing pattern results, on the one hand, from a somewhat lukewarm perception of urban opportunities and, on the other hand, from adverse climatic conditions and land scarcity which put pressure on agricultural activities and foster the search for additional incomes elsewhere.

People have become more flexible and look for quick options. This circular migration is facilitated by the strong urban-rural social networks inherited from the mining migration history and the improvement of infrastructure. Existing financial capital and social networks count; hence, the poorest rural households are likely to migrate.

The diversification of migration patterns since the 2000s has considerably contributed to increased population densities of some regional spaces, such as along the railway or the in the new mining areas. Whether definitive or temporary, this strong internal migration lead to a consideration of whether the territorial level is the relevant scale for designing and implementing public policies. Indeed, analysing local assets and specific constraints is a major avenue for identifying adequate development strategies, taking into account the potential of these migration dynamics.

Fig. 7.1: Evolution of urban population in Zambia and other SSA countries (1950- 2015)

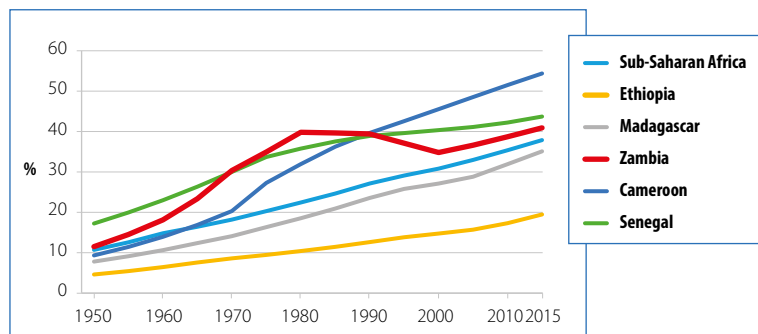


Fig. 7.3: Rural migrant households and reason for migration, per province (2015)

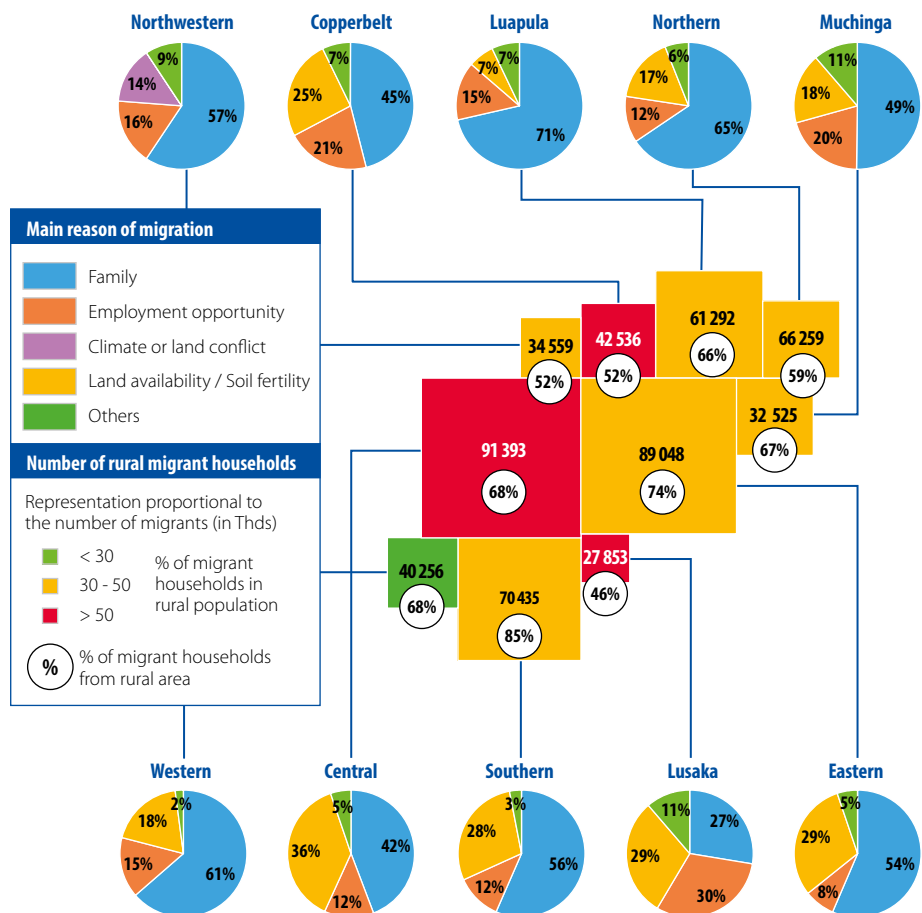


Fig. 7.2: Lifetime net migration rate per district (2010)

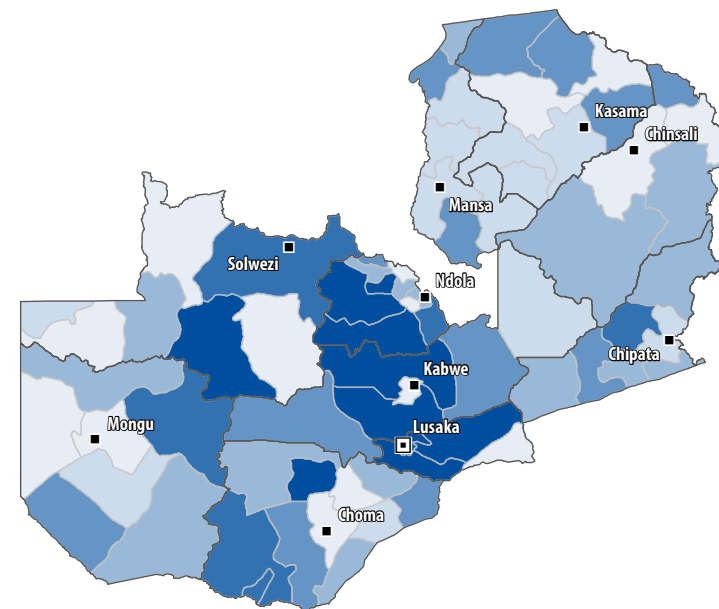
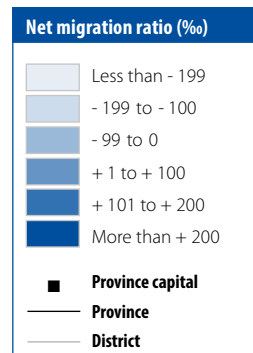


Fig. 7.4: Migration dynamics from 1930s to present

